

- Schumer and Hall Note Orange County's Access to Interstate Highways, Air, and Rail Transportation Options Make It Ideal Location for Hub - - Schumer and Hall Demand More Answers from FEMA on Site Selection Process and Plans -

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer and Congressman John Hall today pressed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to establish a Northeastern Regional Disaster Hub in Orange County. Schumer and Hall pointed out that Orange County and the entire Hudson Valley's proximity to air, rail, and interstate highway transportation options make it an ideal location for an emergency center that would service high-risk areas including Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

FEMA, currently examining its overall assets and capabilities, is exploring the possibility of establishing a hub that would service FEMA regions I, II, and III covering major metropolitan areas such as New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. To date, FEMA has not provided additional information on the site selection process. Senator Schumer and Congressman Hall are pressing FEMA to consider the Town of Walkill as a location for the regional hub. Walkill currently hosts FEMA's Pre-Positioned Equipment Program (PEP) and has significant space available for expansion. Additionally, Orange County's proximity to air, rail, and interstate highway transportation options make it the perfect location for this much-needed resource.

"I have visited the Walkill site and met with the farmers and homeowners devastated by natural disasters such as flooding," said Congressman Hall. "A regional FEMA hub in Orange County is ideally located to meet the security and disaster relief needs of the Hudson Valley, New York City, and the entire metropolitan region. FEMA should choose this site and get the center operating as soon as possible."

"Setting up a regional hub for FEMA in safe proximity to the nation's largest metropolitan region is a no-brainer," Schumer said. "A regional hub would make sure that we can quickly respond to any security threat or natural disaster in the northeast. FEMA needs to stop dragging its feet and provide us with detailed information on a plan for the creation of the hub. Our goal is to make sure the entire Northeast is safe in case of emergency."

Senator Schumer and Congressman Hall have been working to identify locations in New York State that would be best suited for a regional FEMA hub. Both offices have suggested FEMA consider the Pre-Positioned Equipment Program (PEP) site at 35 Crotty Rd, Middletown (Town of Walkill) because of its size and proximity to key transportation options. The regional hub will need to provide a multi-functional mobilization and staging ground and accommodate numerous out-loading and in-loading docks for trucks.

In an effort to establish the hub in the Town of Walkill, Schumer and Hall today wrote a personal letter to FEMA Deputy Administrator Harvey Johnson, urging him to consider Orange County as the location for the Northeast hub, as well as provide details on the project's status and the specifications for such a mega-hub.

Senator Schumer and Congressman Hall wrote, "In order to ensure adequate responsiveness to security threats in major metropolitan regions and to deal with on-going weather-related

disaster declarations, we believe that the establishment of a comprehensive regional Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hub is essential. It is our understanding that FEMA shares this view and is looking for sites to create a Northeast regional hub, and we respectfully request that you consider Middletown, NY for this purpose.”

Dear Deputy Administrator Johnson, In order to ensure adequate responsiveness to security threats in major metropolitan regions and to deal with on-going weather-related disaster declarations, we believe that the establishment of a comprehensive regional Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hub is essential. It is our understanding that FEMA shares this view and is looking for sites to create a Northeast regional hub, and we respectfully request that you consider Middletown, NY for this purpose.

Through a number of meetings and correspondence, we have expressed our desire to work with FEMA to identify locations in New York State for the hub. Based on initial conversations our offices had with officials at FEMA, our understanding is that the mega-hub would service FEMA regions I, II, and III. The site would be a multi-functional mobilization and staging ground with immediate access to rail, air, and highway transportation options. Additionally, the site would accommodate 25 out-loading and 25 in-loading docks. Staff assets on site would be comprised of full-time, part-time, and contractual employees.

With these criteria in mind, we believe that Middletown, NY (Town of Walkill) would be an ideal location for the mega-hub, and that the existing home of FEMA’s PEP site in Walkill would also provide a suitable location. Orange County’s central location, both in New York State and in the Northeast corridor, would provide access to necessary emergency services for those in FEMA Regions I, II, and III. Furthermore, Orange County and the entire Hudson Valley’s proximity to air, rail, and interstate highway transportation options make it an ideal location for an emergency center that would service high-risk areas including Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

We urge you to work with our staff to help turn our vision of a regional hub into a reality. In the hope of achieving some clarity, we are requesting that FEMA provide answers to the following questions:

1. Does FEMA intend to establish a multi-functional mobilization and staging ground (Mega-Hub) servicing FEMA Regions I, II, and III?
2. Has FEMA begun the process of surveying its assets in order to determine the location for such a Mega-Hub?
3. Has FEMA developed its site specification plans for the mega-hub and are they available for review?
4. Is there a comparable facility in FEMA's national assets that would give some insight into the size and scope of such a mega-hub?
5. What process does FEMA intend to employ in order to provide our office with a role in site selection and keep our offices updated on progress?

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important request. If you have any questions please contact Senator Schumer’s Hudson Valley Director, Mike Morey, at

Schumer, Hall to FEMA: Establish Disaster Hub in Hudson Valley Region

Thursday, 31 July 2008 00:00

914-734-1532 and Congressman Hall's District Representative, Frank Giancamilli, at 845-291-4100.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer John Hall -30-